DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 263 FL 027 670

AUTHOR	Thompson, Greg
TITLE	Teachers Studying Abroad: An Analysis of Changes in Linguistic and Cultural Knowledge and Attitudes Toward the Spanish Culture and the Effects of Ethnographic Interviews.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	24p.; Paper presented at the TexFlec Conference (Austin, TX, March 29-30, 2002).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Attitude Change; *Cultural Awareness; Elementary Secondary Education; Ethnography; Faculty Development; Foreign Countries; *Language Proficiency; *Language Teachers; Listening Comprehension; *Spanish; *Study Abroad; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Knowledge
IDENTIFIERS	*Spain

ABSTRACT

The study investigated linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal changes in public school teachers during time spent in a study abroad setting in Spain, noting the effect of their conducting ethnographic interviews while in Spain on those changes. The study also looked at problems teachers experienced while studying abroad. Data from pretests and posttests indicated that the majority of participants made marked gains in speaking ability and listening comprehension in Spanish, and most participants made gains in the other language modalities as well. Statistically significant gains in cultural knowledge were evident. The heterogeneity of the group in relation to experience with the language, teaching, age, and previous time spent abroad made it difficult to find significant results. In the post-study abroad survey, participants found that the ethnographic interviews were very beneficial to their acquisition of cultural knowledge and linguistic skills and to their improved attitudes toward the target culture. Suggestions on how to improve the study abroad experience for teachers are included. (Contains 36 references.) (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Mark Carpenter
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
1

ED 476 263

TEACHERS STUDYING ABROAD: AN ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SPANISH CULTURE AND THE EFFECTS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC INTERVIEWS

GREG THOMPSON, University of Arizona

This paper was presented at the 2002 TEXFLEC Conference

The purpose of this study is to determine linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal changes in public school teachers during time spent in a study abroad setting and the effect of conducting of ethnographic interviews on those changes. This study also looked at some of the problems that teachers experience while studying abroad and offers suggestions on how to improve the study abroad experience for teachers.

This study analyzes the effect of study abroad and ethnographic interviews on participants' linguistic, cultural, and attitudinal changes, participants were given a series of pre- and posttests to determine these changes.

The data revealed that participants made marked gains in speaking ability and listening comprehension of Spanish. Analysis of data showed that the majority of the participants made gains in the other language modalities as well. Statistically significant gains were made in cultural knowledge. The heterogeneity of the group in relation to experience with the language, teaching, age, and previous time spent abroad made it difficult to find significant results. In the post-study abroad survey, participants found that the ethnographic interviews were very beneficial in the acquisition of cultural knowledge, linguistic skills, and in improving attitudes toward the target culture.

INTRODUCTION

Many universities offer study abroad programs for their undergraduate students who are majoring in foreign languages or other curricular areas in which foreign study is considered relevant. Such study abroad programs are often the focus of research efforts to determine the benefits to their participants. In addition to these research studies, there

FL027670

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

is a growing body of research directed at participants in study abroad programs who are language teachers themselves (Rissel, 1995; McIntyre, 1975; Loew, 1980; Kalivoda, 1987). Many of these teachers are interested in taking advantage of the potential for professional development that such programs provide (Kalivoda, 1987).

There is evidence that teachers improve in many facets from their study abroad experience and are able to gain knowledge culturally, linguistically, and depending on the type of program, pedagogically (Rissel, 1995). The experience of teachers may also vary depending on a variety of factors such as their own previous language experience, their overall linguistic ability prior to the program, and their understanding of and experience with the foreign culture. Many schools support the educators and provide grants and other monies to help fund such programs, but the question continues to surface regarding ways to measure and to ensure that significant benefits accrue to participants and their sponsors.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The field of study abroad has grown dramatically in the past twenty years, and much research has gone into this field (Ferguson, 1995). Many studies have been done to measure the linguistic gains of teachers who spent time studying abroad. One such study was conducted with a group of twenty-five language teachers who spent five weeks in Mexico. At the end of the five weeks, they were tested to see what linguistic changes they had experienced during their time abroad. According to Rissel (1995), the teachers studied showed measurable gains in the four basic language modalities (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). All of the language teachers in the study increased their proficiency in these four areas, except for one whose scores decreased. Although this study was very detailed in its analysis of the linguistic gains, it did not attempt to measure some of the mitigating factors as to the why certain teachers progressed more than others. This study also failed to look at any attitudinal changes or cultural gains that teachers may have experienced.

One method with which culture can be examined is through the use of the ethnographic interview. Brecht (1995) pointed out, in a study involving the use of ethnographic interviews, the importance of using these interviews in the language

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

learning process, but failed to present any statistics as to how this technique has functioned with those in a study abroad program. He has simply designated this area as one in which further research is needed.

In a poll conducted among secondary school teachers (Kalivoda, 1987), educators responded to a questionnaire in which they were asked to rate which aspects of foreign language learning they perceived as having the greatest value in their professional development in overseas instruction. Eighty-four percent of the teachers stated that oral proficiency was "of absolute importance" (p.182). Rated almost as high was knowledge of culture, referring to culture in the "anthropological sense" (p.182). The least valued skills for an overseas program among the teachers were those of literature and writing. Nevertheless, in a study of twenty different institutions offering study abroad programs designed for teachers, 34 percent of the courses were literature courses, and fewer than 16 percent of the courses had anything to do with the development of oral proficiency or the study of culture (p. 183).

Phillips (1991) states that the expectations regarding teachers' proficiency have increased with the advent of performance outcomes. She states, "Today's standards, along with the 'small world' phenomenon, mean that teachers often must prove to students, parents, and the community that their second language is strong enough to handle contemporary media, both aural and written, and to interact successfully with native speakers here and abroad" (p. 1).

Lange (1999) stated that culture is too often a "superficial aspect of language learning programs" (p. 58) and suggested that the ethnographic interview is a way in which culture may be effectively used with language instruction. Hill (1972) looked at teachers in Ontario, Canada, who went abroad and studied in Germany. This study abroad program focused on community contact rather than classroom activities. Upon looking at the value of such instruction, Hill found "There is a need in Ontario for foreign language teachers to freshen their facility in conversation and at the same time acquire information of a general and cultural nature for practical use in the classroom" (p. 125).

Allen (2000) claimed that one of the reasons teachers often cite for their discomfort with the integration of language and culture is their lack of experience abroad

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and their lack of "deep understanding" of the culture beyond that of specific facts. Allen evaluated the use of ethnographic interviews with a group of students in the United States, but did not consider how this would function in a study abroad context.

Another area of concern is that of what happens to teachers while they are abroad that may adversely or positively influence their attitude toward the target culture. Studies have shown that factors such as culture shock and homesickness negatively affect study abroad participants' attitudes (Wilkinson, 2000; Davies, 1989).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The aforementioned studies dealt with varying aspects of study abroad programs but failed to take into account the effect of the relationships between cultural knowledge, attitude toward the target culture, and linguistic ability. The purpose of this study is not to measure linguistic ability alone, nor only the cultural knowledge gains and increases in the attitude toward the target culture, but rather to analyze these three different facets together with a group of teachers. The focus of this research is to answer the following questions: (a) What effect does study abroad have on the participants' linguistic abilities, cultural knowledge, and attitude toward the target culture? (b) What factors influence teachers' attitudes during their time abroad? (c) What effect does the use of ethnographic interviews have on teachers' attitudes toward the target culture, linguistic abilities, and cultural knowledge?

PROCEDURES AND DESIGN OF STUDY

All tests selected for this thesis had been previously piloted by other researchers and institutions. The cultural questionnaire was piloted at Brigham Young University in Winter Semester 2000 and subsequently used in a separate research investigation concerning study abroad. The *Oral Testing Software* (OTS), *Placement Exam for Advanced Speakers of Spanish* (PEASS), *Computerized Language Instruction and Practice Software* (CLIPS) Test, and the *Spanish Computer Adaptive Placement Exam* (S-CAPE) were all extensively tested at Brigham Young University and are presently used in many universities and schools in the United States of America.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Participants

Participants in this study were eighteen certified elementary and secondary school teachers. They consisted of five male teachers and thirteen female participants. Of the eighteen participants, all had been born in the United States except two, one from Ecuador and the other from Guatemala. The amount of experience abroad in a Spanish-speaking country included five participants with no experience abroad, four who had spent from one to four weeks abroad, one who had spent from one to six months abroad, six who had spent more than two years abroad in a Spanish-speaking country, and two native-born speakers of Spanish. Four of the participants ranged in age from eighteen to twenty-eight, six between the ages of twenty-nine and thirty-eight, three between the ages of thirty-nine and forty-eight, and five between the ages of forty-nine and fifty-eight. Teaching experience consisted of four first-year teachers, six teachers with between two and five years of experience, three teachers with between six and ten years of experience, three teachers with between eleven and twenty years of experience, and two teachers with more than twenty years of experience. It is important to note that the participants constituted a very heterogeneous group due to different experience, both in the teaching field experience, experience abroad, and ability in the target language which caused some difficulty in showing statistically measurable differences in the pre- and posttests.

INSTRUMENTATION

Several instruments were used to measure participants linguistic ability, cultural knowledge, and attitude toward the target culture. A cultural questionnaire was used to measure the participants' cultural knowledge and attitudes. The cultural questionnaire consisted of seventy-three "True/False/I Don't Know" questions pertaining to cultural knowledge about the people and customs of Spain. The questionnaire also consisted of a Likert-type scale, a modified Bogardus social distance scale, and a semantic differential scale. The Likert-type scale measured participants' responses to a series of statements on a scale ranging from "1=strongly disagree" to "6=strongly agree." The Bogardus social distance scale consists of a relatively small set of homogenous items that are unidimensional. The items are arranged in an inherently progressive order. This scale is a social distance scale that measures with what proximity one would allow a person from

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

a different culture to enter into different social and personal areas of one's life with the furthest being a visitor to one's own country and the closest being that of marriage to a person from the target country. A semantic differential scale requires respondents to chose between to polar opposite adjectives, such as "simple vs. complex" to measure their impressions of the target group.

The *Oral Testing Software* (OTS) was used to measure each participant's speaking ability. The OTS was first developed to test airline flight attendants' speaking abilities for a Flight Attendant Certification Program. It has subsequently been used in language training programs at various institutions. The participants were tested in a computer lab before leaving for and again upon returning from Spain. The OTS recorded the participants' responses to a series of interview situations that included aural and visual prompts. These responses were later analyzed according to the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) scale used by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and by the Meredith Scale (Meredith, 1990, pp. 288-296). The Meredith Scale divides each level of the ACTFL scale into three parts and proceeds logarithmically from one to 6400. The Meredith Scale is designed to reflect the inverted pyramid often associated with the OPI where novice speakers can make gains in a short period of time, whereas more advanced speakers proceed from level to level at a slower rate. These tests were evaluated by a formerly certified ACTFL evaluator.

The participants also took the *Spanish Computer Adaptive Placement Exam* (S-CAPE). This test is used to place examinees in appropriate Spanish classes at Brigham Young University and at other universities. After completing the test, examinees receive a score that corresponds to classes in which they should enroll. This computer test focuses on the examinees' abilities in reading, knowledge of vocabulary, and grammar. As the examinee proceeds and answers a question, the computer bases the difficulty of the next question on the correctness of the answer to the previous one, thus *adapting* to each examinee's ability. For example, if the examinee responds incorrectly, an easier question is given. If the examinee responds correctly, a more difficult question is given. This continues until the level is found at which the examinee can successfully function. It is important to note that this test is used to measure general knowledge and does not test oral or aural ability of students.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The *Computerized Language Instruction and Practice Software* (CLIPS) diagnostic test is used to test all of the major areas in Spanish grammar. This test is used at Brigham Young University to help language learners who want to improve in areas of grammar and determine where they are deficient. In addition to the evaluation instrument, CLIPS provides over 240 different segments in which language learners can work on different grammar points. The segments are based on the grammar elements of nouns, pronouns, modifiers, and verbs. A unit of miscellaneous Spanish grammar, spelling, and writing points is also included in the program. This test looks at reading and writing in relation to Spanish grammar and knowledge of vocabulary, and does not test students' abilities in speaking and listening. The results of the test are classified as passed, deficient, or very deficient.

The *Placement Exam for Advanced Speakers of Spanish* (PEASS) was also given to the participants. This test is designed to place advanced speakers of Spanish into proper university classes. This test consists of three sections: one on listening, where the participants listen to several questions and answer according to their knowledge, another to measure reading, and a third to assess the participants' knowledge of Spanish grammar. This test does not measure students' speaking ability.

A post study abroad survey was given to the participants. It was conducted to measure the participants' impressions of the effects of ethnographic interviews on their attitudes and cultural and linguistic knowledge.

A variety of tests of the participants' linguistic abilities were administered to increase the validity of the results through the use of multiple tests whose reliability had already been established. Though the aforementioned tests have been piloted and tested repeatedly, they were not designed specifically for teachers. However, the age or profession of those taking the tests should not change or negatively affect the results of the tests, since they were designed for all second language learners.

PROCEDURES

Participants were given forms to relate their experience with each of the ten ethnographic interviews that they were to conduct in Spain. They were also given a three-page summary written by the researcher on information found in Spradley's (1979)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

book *The ethnographic interview* and a copy of one ethnographic interview that Spradley conducted and had written up in his book. On the back of each ethnographic interview summary was a series of questions relating to the emotions and feelings of the participants who were conducting the interviews. These questions were written to determine whether any other factors were influencing the participants' attitudes, emotions, or overall well-being at the times of the ethnographic interviews, and also to assess how the interviewers felt after each interview. The pre- and post-tests were taken on the campus of Brigham Young University.

DATA ANALYSIS

Basic descriptive statistics will be presented to determine what changes occur in the participants' linguistic and cultural abilities. A comparison of the pretest and the posttest scores will be analyzed using a 2-sample *t*-test to measure significance.

RESULTS

What Effect Does Study Abroad Have on the Participants' Linguistic Abilities, Cultural Knowledge, and Attitude Toward the Target Culture?

Reading, Vocabulary, and Grammar

Reading, vocabulary, and grammar were measured with several instruments. The following charts analyze the data for: (1) reading, including vocabulary and grammar, as measured by the S-CAPE, (2) listening as measured by the PEASS listening test, (3) cultural knowledge as measured by a cultural questionnaire, (4) Attitudes toward the target culture as measured by the Likert-type, Bogardus, and semantic differential scales. The results for reading, including vocabulary and grammar, as measured by the CLIPS diagnostic test, grammar and vocabulary as measured by the PEASS grammar test, reading and vocabulary as measured by the PEASS reading test, and speaking as measured by the OTS are not given because their the significance of their results was greater than $p = .05$. Significant results for this study must have a p-value of $\leq .05$ however; some results that approach significance are also given.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Reading, vocabulary, and grammar as measured by the S-CAPE.

Table 1 shows that 14, or 78% of the 18 participants, took the *Spanish Computer Adaptive Placement Exam* (S-CAPE) as a pre- and posttest. As seen in Table 1, the mean of the pretest was 664.87 with a standard deviation of 163.6. The mean of the posttest was 747.93 with a standard deviation of 171.01. A *t*-test comparing the pre-and posttest means showed no statistically significant difference (p=.089). Four of the 14 participants' scores declined in the posttest and one remained the same and because the S-CAPE was designed to discriminate between first- and second-year university students. Above a score of 500 on the S-CAPE, the computer classifies all of the scores together. The test was designed to measure novice and intermediate speakers of the language. This test was used to measure those participants who were in the novice and intermediate ranges. All of the participants who scored under 500 on the pretest showed gains on the posttest. The smallest decline was two, while the greatest decline from the pretest to the post test was -117. The greatest gain was 318. The high score on the pretest was 861 and the high score on the posttest was 952. The low score on the pretest was 310 and on the posttest it was 320.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Reading Including Grammar and Vocabulary as Measured by the Spanish Computer Adaptive Placement Exam (S-CAPE)

	No.of Subjects	Mean	Standard Deviation	Low Score	High Score
Pre-test	15	664.87	163.6	310	861
Posttest	15	747.93	171.01	320	952

Listening as measured by the PEASS listening test

Table 2 shows that 12, or 67% of the 18 participants, took both the listening pre- and posttests. The maximum score possible was 40. The mean score on the pretest

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

was 32.33 with a standard deviation of 4.16. As seen in Table 2, the mean score on the posttest was 34.92 with a standard deviation of 2.81. A *t*-test comparing the pre- and posttest means showed no statistically significant difference (p=.089). Of the 12 participants who responded, nine showed positive gains and three declined. The maximum gain was nine and the maximum decline was minus three.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics for Listening as Measured by Placement Exam for Advanced Speakers of Spanish (PEASS) Listening Results

	Number of Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	Low Score	High Score
Pre-test	12	32.33	4.16	26	39
Posttest	12	34.92	2.81	31	38

Cultural knowledge as measured by a cultural questionnaire

Table 3 shows that 10, or 56% of the 18 participants, took both the pre- and posttests. The maximum possible score was 73. As seen in Table 3, the mean score on the pretest was 39.50 with a standard deviation of 14.07. The mean score on the posttest was 51.90 with a standard deviation of 9.36. A *t*-test comparing the pre- and posttest means showed a statistically significant difference (p=.032). Of the 10 participants who responded, nine showed positive gains and one declined. The maximum gain was +32 and the maximum decline was two. The low score on the pretest was 16 and 32 on the posttest. The high score on the pretest was 59 and 61 on the posttest.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Knowledge as Measured by the Cultural Questionnaire

	Number of Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	Low Score	High Score
Pre-test	10	39.50	14.07	16	59
Posttest	10	51.90	9.36	32	61

Attitudes toward target culture as measured by the Bogardus scale questionnaire.

Table 4 shows that 10, or 56% of the 18 participants, took both the pre- and posttests. The maximum score possible was 9. As seen in Table 4, the mean score on the pretest was 8.20 with a standard deviation of 1.14. The mean score on the posttest was 8.90 with a standard deviation of .316. A *t*-test comparing the pre- and posttest means showed no statistically significant difference (p=.09). Of the 10 participants who responded, four showed positive gains and six remained the same. The maximum gain was three. The low score on the pretest was six and eight on the posttest. The high score on the pretest was 9 and 9 on the posttest.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Attitude toward Target Culture as Measured by the Bogardus Scale Questionnaire

	Number of Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation	Low Score	High Score
Pre-test	10	8.20	1.14	6	9
Posttest	10	8.90	.316	8	9

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What Factors Influenced Participants' Attitudes during Their Time Abroad?

Each of the ethnographic interview questions was answered by the participants (the school teachers studying abroad) to ascertain the factors that influenced their attitudes during their time abroad. Of the 18 teachers, 10, or 56%, responded to the question one or more times as the question appeared in each interview. The ten participants who responded completed between three and eleven interviews. Several comments were made regarding both positive and negative experiences abroad. Some of the factors influencing negatively the study abroad experience were problems with fatigue, jet lag, homesickness, getting along with those in the group, traveling, language difficulties, weather, sickness, and service. Some of the factors influencing the study abroad experience positively were food, meeting new people, nightlife, the other teachers, the Brigham Young University professors, not speaking English, and learning new information.

What Effect Does the Use of Ethnographic Interviews Have on Teachers' Attitudes and Linguistic Abilities?

After returning from Spain, the participants were given a survey regarding the effect of conducting ethnographic interviews. They were asked to respond to three questions: (1) How do you feel that doing the ethnographic interviews affected your attitude toward the target culture?, (2) How do you feel that doing the ethnographic interviews affected your knowledge of the target culture?, and (3) How do you feel that doing the ethnographic interviews affected your knowledge of the language?

Table 5 shows that 12, or 67% of 18 responded to all three questions. As seen in Table 5, the mean of question one regarding the effect on attitude toward the target culture was 6.58 with a standard deviation of 1.89. The mean of question two regarding the effect on culture knowledge was 8.67 with a standard deviation of .99. The mean of question three regarding the effect on linguistic ability was 7.12 with a standard deviation of 1.79.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics for Post Study Abroad Survey on the Effect of the Ethnographic Interviews

	Number of Participants	Mean	Standard Deviation
Effect on attitude toward target culture	12	6.58	1.89
Effect on cultural knowledge	12	8.67	0.99
Effect on linguistic ability	12	7.12	1.79

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

What Effect Does Study Abroad Have on the Participants' Linguistic Abilities, Cultural Knowledge, and Attitude Toward the Target Culture?

This section will explain the results of the different tests that the participants took before and after going abroad. It will also offer an interpretation of the different scores of the participants and factors that might have influenced those results.

Reading, grammar, and vocabulary

Reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills were measured by the *Placement Exam for Advanced Speakers of Spanish* (PEASS), *Spanish Computer Adaptive Placement Exam* (S-CAPE), and the *Computerized Language Instruction and Practice Software* (CLIPS) diagnostic test. The majority of the participants experienced positive gains on the PEASS and CLIPS tests. Some declined on the posttests due to a variety of factors such as fossilization, regression toward the mean, test deviation, etc. The classes taken in Spain were not grammar classes. The classes that were offered dealt with pedagogical issues and not linguistic development. The teachers' improvement on the CLIPS diagnostic test and the PEASS tests could be seen as an ancillary result of

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

interacting with the people and spending five-weeks in Spain. The short time spent in Spain also complicated the measuring of significant changes. Most of the instruments used to measure linguistic changes noted some small changes, but they were not statistically significant. This linguistic gain may also be looked at as the recuperation of abilities that have experienced attrition to some degree. In the case of these teachers, many had studied extensively in the university setting and had achieved a degree of linguistic proficiency that they were able to refresh through exposure to authentic language and native speakers. Another factor influencing the results of the tests was the heterogeneity of the participants. The participants varied greatly in age, experience, time abroad, etc. This diversity may have yielded overall results that were not statistically significant, even though when analyzed on an individual basis, many participants experienced significant gains.

Reading, grammar, and vocabulary skills, as measured by the S-CAPE test did not improve significantly, p=.089. Four participants' scores declined on the posttest. This, more than likely, was due to the fact that the test was designed to give general guidelines for placement in first- and second-year university classes. This test showed that those at a lower level all improved on their posttest. Most of the participants were already beyond this level of proficiency. The participants who scored above a score of 500 on the S-CAPE would fluctuate greatly because the test was not designed to distinguish among those at a more advanced level.

Listening

The participants showed salient gains on the listening portion of the PEASS test. Making marked gains in listening ability during the study abroad experience reinforces the importance of interacting with the target culture and listening to authentic speech. When a lower seven participants' scores were analyzed using the *t*-test, they showed significant gains (p=.01). This may reflect a certain degree of homogeneity among the less advanced participants.

The ethnographic interviews provided the participants hours of exposure to native speech in a conversational setting. Though teachers can hear authentic speech at

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

home on international channels and through the use of the Internet, in Spain they were forced to listen to and interact with the people when involved in an interview situation. This participation makes it less of a passive skill and more of an active skill.

Speaking

The oral ability of the participants was measured using the *Oral Testing Software* (OTS). The majority of the teachers improved dramatically in their oral ability. Several teachers showed two level gains on the ACTFL scale. It should be noted that these types of gains are not typical of spending five-weeks abroad, but rather a result of language refreshing. Many teachers had spent two years in a Spanish-speaking country. These participants had achieved a certain level of proficiency, but due to years of exposure only to first- and second-year students, a certain degree of language attrition occurred. When these teachers went abroad, they had the opportunity to raise their proficiency back to the level that they had once achieved. This idea reinforces the importance of going abroad, not only to learn new skills but also to refresh knowledge that has been forgotten due to lack of use.

The ethnographic interviews also provided participants with the opportunity to spend extensive time speaking with natives. This helped them produce speech that could be understood by natives unaccustomed to the speech of non-natives. Some of the teachers who showed little or no improvement in speaking were teachers who had just graduated from the university where they had been involved in classes in Spanish, studying grammar, and practicing Spanish with university colleagues on a regular basis.

Cultural knowledge

The cultural questionnaire that was used to measure cultural knowledge showed a significant difference between the pre- and posttest results (p=.039). All of the teachers showed improvement in cultural knowledge except one. The teachers who improved the most were those who scored the lowest on the pretest. Whether or not the participants were born in the United States or in a Latin-American country did not

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

influence the results of the cultural questionnaire, since some of the greatest gains were made by those born in Latin America. The participant whose posttest score declined had been in Spain before and had some knowledge of the Spanish culture and people, thus scoring relatively high on the pretest. However, two days into the program, this participant moved into a hotel instead of staying in the living arrangements made for all the participants which was to stay with older Spanish widows. This participant also refused to eat the food that was provided as part of the program but preferred to eat at American restaurants that were located in different parts of Spain where the Summer Institute participants visited. Additionally, this participant completed only three of the ethnographic interviews, and those three forms were incomplete. It appears as though these factors caused that this participant, who had some knowledge from a previous visit, became unsure of the knowledge that had been acquired before, and, therefore, his posttest results were lower. This is evidence of possible negative effects of isolation from the target culture and people while participating in a study abroad program.

Attitudinal changes

Attitudinal changes were measured by three different scales: Likert-type, Bogardus, and semantic differential. The Likert-type scale reflected some marked changes in attitude that the participants experienced while studying abroad. Many participants had quite positive attitudes toward Spain and the Spanish people before and after their time abroad. All of the participants showed gains that ranged from one to fifteen on the posttest, where the maximum score possible was 66. It is notable that one participant who showed the greatest gain, +14, was one who had spent two years in Spain as a missionary. Apparently, this participant developed some ideas about the Spanish people that may have affected his attitude due to experiences as a missionary, and these ideas were changed during the study abroad program. The experience of this participant as a missionary may have resulted from limited contact with certain people in situations where he was proselyting. However, being a participant in an academic program, rather than a missionary, allowed different relationships to form with the people. He stated in the ethnographic interviews that he was able to become involved with the young people in Spain by going to dances and interviewing people of his own age. The

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ethnographic interviews also allowed participants to meet with a variety of people from the target culture and interact on a one-to-one basis.

The Bogardus scale questionnaire showed that the majority of those who took the survey showed little or no change in this scale. It was based on a nine-point scale, which is fairly narrow. One notable change was that of a three-point increase which was from a native from Latin America. This may have resulted from preconceptions about the culture and then finding out, through personal experience, what the target culture and people are really like. Another gain, +2, was shown for the same participant who increased 14 on the Likert-type scale mentioned above, indicating that the experience that this participant had in Spain caused a substantial change in attitude. Six of the participants scored the maximum number on the pre- and posttests, indicating that they had a very positive attitude toward the target culture before and after their time abroad.

The semantic differential scale reflected the least statistically significant change among the participants. This scale analyzed how the participants perceived the target people and culture. Many factors influenced the responses of the participants on this scale. For many, it was their first time in Spain, and preconceived notions may have played a part in these changes. The posttest was also given right after the participants returned from Spain, so they may have felt a bit of "culture shock" after their time abroad. (There is research to suggest that attitudes tend to improve with the passing of time so that after six months or a year, the participants' attitudes would likely be much higher than before. See Bernabeu, 2001).

The participant who showed the greatest decline in the posttest semantic differential questionnaire was the same native Latin American who improved the most on the Bogardus scale. This participant expressed in the semantic differential questionnaire a lack of experience with the Spanish culture and based her responses on the Hispanic culture where she grew up. This participant also stated that her perception of the Spanish culture was that it was comparable to that of Latin America due to similar backgrounds. After spending time in Spain, this participant was able to answer in a more informed way based on personal experiences instead of comparisons to Latin America.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

What Factors Influence Teachers' Attitudes during Their Time Abroad?

The participants showed overall increases in their attitudes. This program lasted only five-weeks, yet some participants stated that they were ready to go home after that period of time. Some of the negative influences could be accentuated in a program that lasts longer, where there would be more separation from family, friends, and familiar culture.

What Effect Does the Use of Ethnographic Interviews Have on Teachers Attitudes and Linguistic Abilities?

A post study abroad survey was conducted to measure the participants' impressions of the effects of ethnographic interviews on their attitudes and cultural and linguistic knowledge. Participants felt that ethnographic interviews helped them in all three of those aspects. Teachers felt that ethnographic interviews were especially helpful in the acquisition of cultural knowledge, due to the fact that the participants chose topics or cultural questions that were interesting to them. Many participants chose to ask native informants questions that they had thought about for a long period of time. Several were excited to return to their schools with their new found knowledge and share it with their students. One participant also expressed that she was able to overcome her shyness because she knew that she had to do the ethnographic interviews and so she was always on the lookout for someone whom she could interview.

Regarding linguistic gains, one participant, who was born in Latin America, stated that she was able to learn many new vocabulary words that she was later able to incorporate into her class. Another teacher stated that it was most beneficial for her because she was able to learn a more technical vocabulary as well as vocabulary relating to politics. She stated that there were many anglicized words in Spanish that she did not know how to say in a more formal Spanish. One participant stated, "My language abilities improved to the point that for the first time in my life, I actually felt comfortable talking with my dad." Another student stated, "Before I went to Spain, I couldn't speak Spanish; however, when I came back, I spoke."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Cultural attitudes also improved according to the participants. One participant, who was born in Latin America, stated that she was able to learn more about her heritage and where her ancestors came from. Several participants stated that they were able to learn about different people in Spain and found out that even though we are all quite different, we are all alike in many ways. One participant stated that, through the interviews, he found the people to be "very open and honest." This same participant found Spaniards to be very helpful, relating that one gentleman took him to the nearest metro station when all he asked for were directions. Other comments made by the participants indicated how friendly the people were, how willing to share information and spend time talking about their country. One participant stated, "I feel like the Spanish language expresses feelings more beautifully than English does." Another explained that she was able to overcome some stereotypes that she had of the Spanish youth through the use of the interviews. She also commented on how respectful the people that she met were toward her and the other Americans with whom she traveled. All of the participants had many positive things to say about the people and the interviews, indicating that the interviews proved to be an excellent learning and growing opportunity for them. On the other hand, many stated that one of the negative aspects of the interviews was the lack of time to talk with the people whom they were interviewing.

LIMITATIONS

There were several limitations to this study that should be mentioned. One limitation was that all of the participants were not able to complete all of the posttests. It is not known what the results would have been if all of the data had been gathered. Attempts were made to gather data, but they were often unsuccessful. Another limitation is that the teachers were not properly trained to give ethnographic interviews by an experienced ethnographer, so the interviews that they conducted were based only on ethnographic interviewing principles.

The oral tests were scored by an ex-certified ACTFL evaluator who was not certified at the time of the evaluation of the interviews. This may have affected the validity of the speaking scores. Finally, no control group was used, which made it

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

impossible to compare gains due to the effects of study abroad alone and the effects of study abroad and ethnographic interviews together.

IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that a study be designed to gather empirical data as to the effects of the ethnographic interviews on the participants' abilities and knowledge compared to a control group that does not conduct the ethnographic interviews.

The same study could be conducted with a group of high school or university students, and a comparison could then be done between this group and a group of older language learners to measure and compare the effects of the ethnographic interview on the linguistic and cultural knowledge and cultural attitudes of the two age groups. This study could also be performed in a Latin-American country to see if results differ in a non-European country.

Finally, questions could be added to each ethnographic interview sheet that specifically ask how participants feel that the interviews are affecting their linguistic and cultural knowledge and attitude. This information could then be compared with actual measurable gains to see if their perception is reflected on the posttest gains.

REFERENCES

Allen, L. (2000). Culture and the ethnographic interview in foreign language teacher development. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33, 51-57.

Arries, J. (1994). Constructing culture study units: A blueprint and practical tools. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 523-534.

Barro, A., M. Byram, H. Grimm, and C. Roberts. (1993). Cultural studies for advanced language learners, 55-70 in D. Graddall, L. Thompson, and M. Byram, eds., *Language and Culture*. Clevedon, Eng.: British Association of Applied Linguistics.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Bernabeu, J.A. (2001). El conocimiento cultural de la pequeño "c" y la actitud hacia los españoles de participantes en un programa de estudios de BYU en el extranjero. Thesis. Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Blender, E. (1997). "Group dynamics theory and its application to study abroad groups." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages, Toronto, Ontario, 28 December 1997.

Bragaw, D. (1991). Priority: Curriculum. The global imperative and its metalanguage. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 115-124.

Bragger, J. (1985). Materials development for the proficiency-oriented classroom. In Charles James (ed.) *Foreign language proficiency in the classroom and beyond.* Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook. 79-115.

Brecht, R., Davidson, D., Ginsberg, R. (1995). Predictors of foreign language gain during study abroad. *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context.* Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Brecht, R., and J. Robinson. (1993). *Qualitative analysis of second language acquisition in study abroad: The ACTR/NFLC Project.* Washington DC: National Foreign Language Center.

Cerych, L., Opper, S. (1990). Preparation for and experiences within study abroad programmes. *Study abroad programmes.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Davies, K. (1989). The relationship between personal and educational background and cultural attitude shift in BYU study abroad students. Thesis. Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

Ferguson, C. (1995). Foreword. *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context.* Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Frank, V. (1997). "Potential negative effects of omestay." Paper presented to The Middle Atlantic Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Albany, NY, 22 March 1997.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Garraty, J., Klemperer, L., Taylor, C. (1978). *The new guide to study abroad.* New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row Publishers.

Glisan, E., Phillips, J. (1989). Immersion experiences for teachers: A vehicle for strengthening language teaching. *The Canadian Modern Language Review*, 45, 478-484.

Goodwin, C., and M. Nacht. (1988). *Abroad and beyond: Patterns in American overseas Instruction.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hickey, L. (1980). Ethnography for language learners. *Foreign Language Annals*, 6, 475-481.

Hill, J. (1972). Report on SK 6 Berlin. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 28, 70-73.

Jorden, E. and A. Walton. (1987). "Truly Foreign Languages: Instructional Challenges," in Lambert, R., *Foreign Language Instruction: A National Agenda.* Philadelphia: American Academy of Social Sciences.

Kalivoda, T. (1987). Advanced level instruction overseas- An analysis of teacher priorities for curriculum design. *Hispania, 70*, 161-186.

Lange, D. (1999). "Planning for and using the new culture standards." 57-135 in June K. Phillips, ed., *Foreign Language Standards: Linking Research, Theories, and Practices.* Lincoln-wood, IL: National Textbook.

Loew, H. (1980). *Assessing study abroad programs for secondary school teachers.* Washington D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Mantle-Bromley, C. (1993). Preparing teachers to make a difference in global education. *Foreign Language Annals*, 26, 208-216.

McIntyre, P. (1975). *American teachers and students abroad.* Washington D.C.: U.S. Printing Office.

Meredith, R. (1990). The oral proficiency interview in real life: Sharpening the scale. *Modern Language Journal*, 74, 288-296.

Millman, M. (1988). The renaissance of foreign language teaching in Alabama: A case study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 21, 553-559.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Morain, G. (1983). Commitment to the teaching of foreign cultures. *The Modern Language Journal*, 67, 403-412.

Phillips, J. (1991). Upgrading the target language proficiency levels of foreign language teachers. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 328-082)

Pusey, C. R. (1967). Teaching authentic language through "Small c Culture." Paper presented at Brigham Young University. Provo, UT.

Rissel, D. (1995). Learning by doing: Outcomes of an overseas summer project for teachers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 28, 121-133.

Rivers, W. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of homestay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31, 492-500.

Robinson, G. (1988). *Crosscultural Understanding.* New York: Prentice Hall.

Seelye, H. (1993). *Teaching Culture: Strategies for Intercultural Communication.* Chicago, Illinois: National Textbook Company.

Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview.* New York, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Taylor, J. S. y Luckau, P. F. (1996). Fundamentals of language teaching: What every Spanish teacher needs to know. Brigham Young University. Provo, Utah.

Wilkinson, S. (1998). Study abroad from the participant's perspective: A challenge to common beliefs. *Foreign Language Journal*, 31, 23-39.

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

[X] This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

[ ] This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").